



Strategize

When considering any new social network, think about whether the platform will serve your strategic goals and if the staff investment is worth the time to take it on. If you are trying to reach professional or academic audiences, LinkedIn could be what you're looking for. Start by asking: Who are your target audiences, where can they be found and what do you want them to do? The [Spitfire Smart Chart®](#) helps you think through these questions and determine if you should incorporate LinkedIn into your overarching communication strategy.

Getting Started on LinkedIn

LinkedIn has been categorized by many as a job-hunting tool. This reputation naturally developed because of the structure of the tool: Members are encouraged to list their bio and past jobs and build connections with colleagues or companies they know offline. However, this reputation can be misleading as many nonprofits do not see the value in LinkedIn and overlook the vast opportunities that exist to gain volunteers, find board members and even secure funds.



+Create Your Page

The first step to using LinkedIn is to create a “company page.” A company page is very similar to a Facebook company page in that you may post status updates and share links and photos. The difference is that LinkedIn members can interact on a deeper level with your organization than they can on Facebook. Specifically, members can see who they know at your organization and reach out directly to those individuals to learn more.



+Increase Your Visibility

Each time your organization is listed on a LinkedIn member's profile, it helps put you in front of vast networks of like-minded people. Encourage your current and past staffers and volunteers to include your organization on their profiles.



+Build a Following

When setting up your company page, list details about your mission, activities and history. Be sure to include your address, skills or specialties, banner image and a link to your website and other social media profiles. Check out these nonprofits for ideas about how to use LinkedIn successfully.

Connect

There are several ways for your organization to use LinkedIn. Think about how you use your personal networks for your own objectives and apply that logic to your organization's needs.

1. **Post a volunteer opportunity.** More than nine million LinkedIn members want to volunteer their time to good causes. To reach these members, LinkedIn created the “[volunteer marketplace](#),” where members can search opportunities to volunteer in their communities. Additionally, LinkedIn charges companies a fee to post job opportunities, which can cost up to \$400 for 30 days. However, 501(c)(3) nonprofits located in the U.S. receive a 90 percent discount.
2. **Map out your connections.** Are you applying for a grant and want to know if you have any connections? Who could put in a good word? Trying to confirm a dynamic speaker for your annual meeting?
 - Go to LinkedIn and search for the relevant organization, then click on the organization link. On the organization's page there is a box on the right saying how you're connected. Click “See All.” Look for your shared connections. Determine if you are close enough to any of the connections to ask them to put in a good word or connect you directly.
 - Another option is if you know the name of the particular person (potential speaker or decision-maker for the funding opportunity) you want to reach. If you know the name, type it in the search box and click the person's profile. Scroll to the bottom to see if you have any shared contacts. If so, determine if you feel comfortable reaching out to your shared connections with the ask.
3. **Share content.** Reuse the photos, news articles and stories that you share on your organization's other social media channels. Don't worry about posting every day, but try to post a few times a week.

4. **Advertise.** Try advertising your page and posts to specific people based on their current job level, company, position or location.
 - Create an ad for your page if you want to raise awareness about your organization. Use your logo for the picture and include a headline and description of your organization.
 - While your status will appear in your followers' newsfeed without an advertising budget – unlike Facebook – sponsoring updates can help you reach the exact people that you want to reach. For your posts that you'd like people to take action on or interact with, click "Sponsor Update" and experiment with a small budget to determine what audience targeting works best.
5. **Find board members.** By posting open board roles, you can leverage the power of the LinkedIn network to identify and target qualified professionals for your board.
6. **Join groups.** A LinkedIn group is a subset of members with common interests and a place for professionals in the same industry to share content, find answers, post and view jobs, make business connections and establish themselves as experts. You can find groups to join by using the search feature at the top of your homepage or by viewing suggestions of groups that you may like.

Analyze and Listen

As with all digital platforms, evaluate how your audience is engaging with your content and if there are changes that you should make to achieve your objectives. As a page administrator, use your page's Analytics tab to view data about your organization's page. The tab is broken into three sections: Updates, Followers and Visitors. Track each of these metrics on a monthly basis.

+Updates

Impressions: The number of times each update was shown to LinkedIn members.

Clicks: The number of clicks on your content, company name or logo. This number doesn't include shares, likes or comments.

Interactions: The number of times people have liked, commented on or shared each update.

+Followers

Count: Keep track of the number of people who choose to follow your organization.

Follower Demographics: A breakdown of who's following your organization using five types of demographic data. Use the drop-down menu on the right to filter with the following demographics: seniority, industry, function, region and company size.

How You Compare: How do your follower numbers compare to those of other companies? How do you rank?

+Visitors section

Unique Visitors: This graph shows how many LinkedIn members visited your page. This removes duplicate visits to a single page such as when a member refreshes your page or leaves for a few minutes but returns.

Visitor Demographics: This graph breaks down who's visiting your page with the following demographics: seniority, industry, function, region and company size.